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Articles

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4: EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: MANAGING ANXIETY

Daniel Goleman tells us in his book *Emotional Intelligence* that the human being has two distinctively different brains: "one that feels and one that thinks". The emotional/rational dichotomy approximates the folk distinction between "heart" and "head". These two minds operate in tight harmony intertwining their two different ways of knowing to guide us through the world.

When it comes to managing emotions, there are two main categories: (a) arousal emotions, and (b) emotions that slow down or suppress. Emotions that arouse include: anger and anxiety. These emotions need to be managed by soothing and calming. On the other hand, emotions that slow down include: depression and sadness. These emotions need activity and stimulation. It is the thinking of the left prefrontal lobe that modifies these emotions which enables the response to be emotionally intelligent.

The processes of emotional intelligence include:

First – the **intra-personal skills** that enable the person to form an accurate picture of oneself, access one's own feelings and draw upon the emotions to guide behavior, and ...

Second – the **inter-personal skills** that provide the ability to understand other people and to discern, respond appropriately to moods, temperaments, motivations and desires of other people.

Emotional intelligence combines the following steps:

1) **INTRA-PERSONAL ABILITIES:**

- a) **Knowing** one's own emotions – self-awareness or recognizing a feeling as it happens.
- b) **Controlling** one's own emotions – the capacity to control and soothe one's self so that feelings can be responded to appropriately.
- c) **Managing** one's own emotions - the capacity to marshal emotions in the service of a goal.

2) **INTER-PERSONAL ABILITIES:**

- a) **Empathy** – the capacity to listen to and be attuned to another person.
- b) **Relate** – the capacity to interact with others smoothly by coordinating moods and dealing effectively with the other person's emotions.



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2) *Inter-personal abilities (contd)*

c) **Optimism** – the capacity to live out of the creative, co-operative, positive approach of "how" to make things happen. The intra-personal emotional intelligence is needed first before moving to the interpersonal emotional intelligence. As you will see in the following examples, the principles of agape love are integral to the practice of emotional intelligence.

How to Deal with “Anxiety” Using Emotional Intelligence

1) Intra-personal (within self)

a) Self-Awareness

- know and recognize the feeling of anxiety
- express the anxiety by putting it into words, e.g. I feel anxious, worried, fearful, apprehensive, doubting, upset, uneasy
- understand the causes of the anxiety

b) Self-Control (all feelings are OK, some responses are not)

- bring the anxiety under control – Philippians 4:13 “I can do everything through him who gives me strength.”
- stop ruminating on the thought(s)
- distract the mind by meditating on something else (memorize and repeat Bible verses such as Matthew 6:25-34)
- use relaxation techniques to reduce the arousal
- be still and listen to God’s truth
- ask Jesus for the gift of self-control (Galatians 5:23)
- reappraise the thought, reframe it and put the thought(s) into perspective

c) Self-Manage

- stop comparing to others
- confess any idolatry of focusing on Self
- forgive self and eliminate false guilt, self-criticism, self-judgment and self-punishment
- choose Philippians 4:8-9, think about what is true, noble, right, pure, lovely,
- admirable, excellent and praiseworthy
- know your True Self In Christ – your identity as a chosen, child of God
- ask Jesus to reveal his will and truth in the situation
- find new meaning in the situation – what can I learn?



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2) Inter-personal Relationship (with others)

a) Empathy (needs calmness and receptivity)

- with humility, listen to the other person's perspective without comparing
- with care and compassion, understand other person's feelings and validate his/her story
- connect with other person's feelings and reflect them back

b) Relate

- 1 John 4:18 – "There is no fear in love"
- be aware of other person's social and emotional cues (observe, mirror, engage in communication and enjoin with the person)
- be sensitive to appropriate and acceptable behavior
- ask Jesus to be with you in the relating (2 Timothy 1:7 – "For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.")
- look for ways to up-build and uplift the other
- offer acceptance, respect, compassion, love, and nurture the other person's growth for his/her well-being

c) Optimism

- review successes in life and use the resources in the successes to move forward with confidence
- smile and expect the best
